

PLEASE AMEND THE ABOVE-IDENTIFIED APPLICATION AS FOLLOWS:

In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph.

--In the next step, FIG. 2f, the photoresist is stripped away, exposing the electroplated copper 18. The copper dual damascene 18 and barrier metal layer 16 are next planarized by CMP. FIG. 2g shows the copper partially removed by CMP and FIG. 2h shows the copper dual damascene 18 and metal barrier layer 16 after completion of CMP where the copper dual damascene 18 is completely coplanar with the upper surface and without any dishing in the trenches 12, 13, 14, and 15. In a last step the copper dual damascene is sealed with a cap layer 25, such as nitride or oxynitride. The copper layer 18 can be replaced by a layer of metal from the group comprising gold, aluminum, tungsten, titanium, or silver.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph.

--Now referring to FIG. 3c, the photoresist is applied and a reverse tone photoresist mask 39 is formed. Note that the same numbers in FIG. 2 and FIG. 3

identify the same component. As shown in FIG. 3c, there is no photoresist between trenches 32, 33, 34, and 35, because the reverse tone photo mask of the metal lines is used which by definition covers only those parts of the copper layer that are in the trenches. Next, see FIG. 3d, follows etching the copper layer 18 and barrier metal layer 16 from areas not covered by the reverse tone photoresist mask. Etching can be achieved using a dry anisotropic etch typically with chlorine (Cl_2) as the etchant or using a wet isotropic etch typically with nitric acid (HNO_3) as an etchant. Note that copper has been etched away from areas 20, 21, 22, and 23. In FIG. 3e the photoresist has been stripped exposing the deposited copper 18 underneath. The copper damascene 18 and barrier metal layer 16 are next planarized by CMP. FIG. 3f shows the copper partially removed during CMP and FIG. 3g shows the copper damascene 18 and metal barrier layer 16 after completion of CMP where the copper damascene 18 is completely coplanar with the upper surface and without any dishing in trenches 32, 33, 34, and 35. A last step is the sealing of the copper damascene with a cap layer 25, such as nitride or oxynitride. The copper layer 18 can be replaced by a layer of metal from the group comprising gold, aluminum, tungsten, titanium, or silver.--